CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 12.11.2013:

President Brian Asquith opened the meeting attended by 20 members at 19.45 hours and invited **Reg Harrison** to present his display of **BELGIUM.**

Before becoming an independent country Belgium was "ruled" by a variety of countries such as Netherlands, Spain, Austria, France and Germany. The first part of the display was taken up by early postal history showing a variety of postmarks, hand stamps and individual date stamps. The earliest letter shown was dated 1484.

In 1830 Belgium became an independent country and a double circular hand stamp introduced. The first postage stamps, produced in 1849, showed the King's head, there being two values only – up to 30 kilometres and over 30 kilometres. The early stamps of Belgium were rich in perforations, postmarks, multiples, specimens and forgeries.

An interesting feature of stamps produced after World War I reflected the Catholic nature of the country. To avoid the postman having to work on a Sunday, stamps were printed with a detachable label which stated 'not to be delivered on a Sunday'. Those people who wished that their letter should not be delivered on that day send it with the label still intact.

Reg also showed a variety of other material including examples of the travelling post offices of the railway system, postal stationary used on the Dover-Ostende route, early airmails, express mail, telegrams, parcel dockets, postage dues, postage booklets, miniature sheets and special issues.

An excellent and varied display thoroughly enjoyed by all present. The meeting closed at 21.45 hours.

Graham Harker, Honorary Assistant Secretary
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